



# U.S. Cancellation Club **NEWS**

Vol. 30, No. 5, Whole No. 278, February 2011

## Early Cancellations

by Roger D. Curran

The canceling practices during the earliest stages of postage stamp use in the U.S. provide an interesting study. For the first Post Office Department (POD) stamps, the 1847 issue, the earliest cancels (Figure 1)<sup>1</sup> were the square grid of New York City and the enclosed round grid distributed by the POD at the time of the 1847 issue was introduced. They are by far and away the most common handstamp cancels found on the 1847 issue.



Figure 1

The New York Post Office was the first post office to take delivery of these new postage stamps and, with one exception, the earliest eleven reported 1847 issue covers all originated in New York City.<sup>2</sup> The stamps on at least seven bear the square grid cancel. The exception is a cover posted with a Sc 1 in New Hamburg, NY addressed to Ithaca, NY. Neither of these two post offices canceled the stamp which had been brought to New Hamburg by a New York City resident who was temporarily living in New Hamburg.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 2. The earliest recorded use of the standard P.O.D. grid cancellation.



Figure 4

The earliest reported use of the standard POD grid (Figure 2) is from Philadelphia dated July 12 (1847). As time went on, of course, other handstamp cancelers (overwhelmingly grids) were acquired or made by local postmasters to cancel the 1847 issue, but their number and variety are distinctly limited when compared with what was to follow. (Manuscript cancels are frequently seen on the 1847s and handstamps designed for other purposes – e.g., “PAID”, rate numerals, etc. were also used.)

**PAID**

Figure 3

Continued on page 76....



## Editor's Corner

Dear Reader,

Happy New Year to all! This new year brings with it several changes for the USCC and I'll comment here on two. First of all, we have a new president, John Donnes, a long-time member of our Club who is no stranger to these pages. John's philatelic experience is varied and impressive. For years he was one of the guiding lights and major organizers for the annual "Happening" held in New Orleans which is sponsored by the Crescent City Stamp Club. For a long time, John specialized in the 12¢ Banknote and its postal history and his exhibit on this subject garnered high awards. More recently, John has focused on New York City postal history, with a special interest in cancellations, during the Banknote era and now also the 1860s. He is making a detailed study of NYC cancellation varieties and plans to publish a report in the future. John's interest in cancellations, however, is considerably broader than just New York and, as readers of the *NEWS* know, he is a true expert in making tracings of the markings that so enthrall us. The USCC is very fortunate to have John at the helm and good things are sure to result.

A second change concerns the production of the *NEWS*. At the time we switched to color in 2008, the USCC engaged the services of Dick Sine, well known in the philatelic community as an editor, to handle the page layouts and printing of the *NEWS*. Dick has performed that job admirably and it has been a pleasure working with him. However, as a consequence of the need to save money wherever possible, the USCC board decided to accept a new arrangement that recently presented itself. Matt Kewriga has generously volunteered to do the page layouts and will work with the Wilcox printing company to print and distribute the *NEWS*. Wilcox is the printer of the *Chronicle*, journal of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society. The current issue of the *NEWS* is the first under the new procedure.

Sincerely, Roger

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Editor, U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS  
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## WANTED

Scotts Type A-25 (#65, 88, 94, etc.) both on and off cover with an S&E GE-P 29 San Francisco Type 1 Cogwheel cancel.

Ronald Williams  
PO Box 132  
Brunswick, TN 38014  
rnbwilliams@earthlink.net

## The U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS

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## President's Message

Dear Readers,

I would first like to start off by wishing everyone a happy and prosperous new year and to give a report on the board recommendations and the recent club election. With the board honoring Roger Curran's request to step down as President and the resignation of Abe Boyarsky as Second Vice President, a few name changes to the U.S.C.C. Officers were in order.

Roger Curran served as Club President for thirteen years and as editor of the *NEWS* for twenty. His service as President will be sorely missed. Fortunately for the Club, his continuance as editor is, without a doubt, appreciated and welcomed by all.

As can be seen on the *NEWS* masthead, I'm happy to report that Vince Costello and Roger Rhoads continue the positions that they previously held.

Abe Boyarsky served the Club, not only as President from 1988 to 1991, and vice president before that, but as a board member for the last eight years. It should go without saying that I and the members of the Club thank him for his years of dedication and leadership. His position of Second Vice President has been filled by a fairly new member, Matthew Kewriga. Matt is, when considering the average age of an APS member, a young but dedicated collector. Besides being a full time stamp dealer, he is an award winning stamp exhibitor, an accredited APS judge, and a section editor for the *Chronicle*. I believe his youth and enthusiasm will definitely be an asset to our Club.

Taking the place of Governor at Large is Club member Dan Richards. Dan has been a collector for many years specializing in the area of NYFM, the postal history of various cities, and U.S. cancels in general. I welcome him to the board.

With the fast approaching 2011 APS Stamp Show in Columbus, OH this August it is hoped that Club members will participate in the Club's one frame exhibit competition. What better way is there to show your particular collecting interests than by sharing your collection with others?

In the same vein, I encourage the membership to help our editor by submitting an article for publication in the *NEWS*. It need not be long. If the subject matter is of particular interest to you, chances are, it will be of interest to others. Take it from me, Roger's editing skills and his eagerness to help with articles will make writing an article a pleasurable experience.

In closing I would like to say that I feel it an honor and a privilege to have been recommended by the board and elected by the membership to serve as the new President of the U.S. Cancellation Club. I will, with the help and support of all the Club members, try to do my best in continuing to make the Club the great organization that it is. I also look forward to meeting many Club members at the APS show this August.

Respectfully, John Donnes

## Common Cancel, Uncommon Use

The cancel used by 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. post offices more than any other was undoubtedly the "wheel of fortune" cancel illustrated in Figure 1. It has been associated with more than 1,000 post offices. The cancel possesses a highly intricate and appealing design which was produced from rubber-faced handstamps that could be made and sold at minimal cost. This appealed, of course, to small town postmasters who were more concerned about price than having durable cancellers that would hold up under heavy volume.

The Siegel sale 1000 held in December 2010 included a remarkable use of the wheel cancel. Lot 1075 was a Sc 102, the 1875 re-issue of the 1861 one cent blue, canceled by a wheel of fortune. Through the courtesy of the Siegel company, the stamp is shown here as Figure 1. What a rare combination this must be! It is interesting to note that the lot description refers to the cancel as a "Nautilus Shell" fancy cancel. Especially when one sees cut nautilus shells exposing the filigree-like chambers within, the similarity becomes apparent. Years ago the cancel was sometimes referred to as a Japanese umbrella.



Fig. 1

The wheel of fortune seems to be very scarce on any stamp above the 10¢ denomination. The *NEWS* would welcome reports of such examples on or off cover or any other unusual uses.

## Old English "S" Attributed

Wendell Triplett submitted a beautiful old English "S" cancel in blue ink on an off-cover 10¢ Banknote (Sc 161) that appeared on page 56 of the November 2010 *NEWS*. We can now attribute this cancel to Syracuse, NY with usage on registered mail. Syracuse had, as was typical, a special postmark for registered mail that was not duplexed to a killer and thus there was a need for a simplex killer. Lot 1044 in the Kelleher sale no. 623 of the Arthur Beane cancel collection consisted of two Syracuse registered covers with stamps canceled by this same "S" design, one in magenta ink and the other in blue. Both covers bore 13¢ in postage including a Sc161 stamp. The blue "S" cover is dated 3/28/76 and the magenta 4/27/76 (illustrated below).





*Early Cancellations, continued from front page.*

If our focus, however, is on the earliest postage stamps *recognized* by a U.S. post office, we need to go back in time from 1847 to 1845 to the issuance of the New York Postmaster's Provisional (NYPP) stamp, the first postmaster's provisional issued in the U.S. By specifying "postage" stamp, which paid for transmission of mail from one post office to another, we distinguish postmaster provisional stamps from carrier stamps which paid the fee for intra-city pickup and/or delivery. Two recent Siegel sales (993, Part 1 and 999) included some very early NYPP covers and others noteworthy from a cancellation standpoint.

The NYPPs have been carefully studied and a census of earliest recorded uses has been developed. There are now eleven covers (on cover fronts) reported with the earliest recorded date of July 15, 1845.<sup>4</sup> Nine are addressed to foreign destinations. On one of the two domes-



Figure 5



Figure 6

tic uses (sale 993, lot 1) the stamp bears both manuscript cancels and a strike of the familiar curved red "PAID" handstamp marking (Figure 3) seen on a great many stampless New York City covers. On all the other July 15, 1845 covers, the stamps were canceled only with the curved red "PAID." We can thus say that this is the earliest handstamp cancel found on the NYPP which, again, is the earliest stamp paying U.S. postage. Figure 4 was lot 584 in Siegel sale 999 and is one of the July 15, 1845 foreign destination covers.

While the "PAID" was clearly the *handstamp* cancel of choice on the NYPPs until the introduction of the square grid, manuscript cancels were by far the most common cancels overall on the New Yorks. A census of NYPP cancels revealed 59.7% to be blue pen, 13.6% square grid, 13.4% curved red "PAID", and 5.8% red townmarks, with a number of smaller percentage categories making up the remainder.<sup>5</sup> It seems clear that there was no specific means of cancellation

mandated by the NYPO, at least initially, as a July 16, 1845 cover (Figure 5, sale 999, lot 586) shows only manuscript cancels. As would be expected, considerable variation in completeness and clarity of the "PAID" strikes is seen making up that 13.4% of all NYPP cancels. Figure 6, dated July 27, 1845 (sale 999, lot 588) shows a very complete example.

The New York square grid appeared in late 1846 and continued in use until shortly after the 1851 issue stamps were introduced. A February 1847 example is illustrated as Figure 7. There was a November 11 cover in the Creighton Hart collection with a pair of NYPPs canceled by the square grid that has been said to be an 1846 example, which would make it the earliest recorded use of the square grid. However, it is not clear to your editor that 1846 has been firmly established for that cover as opposed to a late use of the stamps in 1847. If any reader has information on this point, the *NEWS* would welcome learning of it.



Figure 7



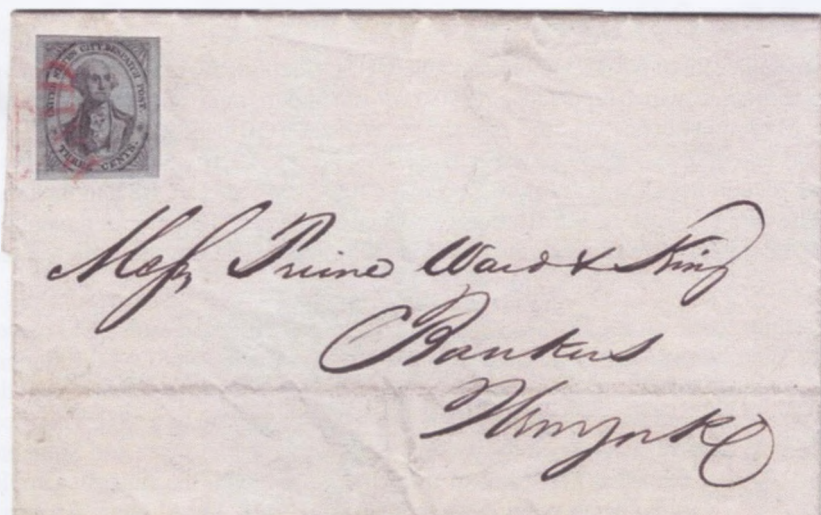


Figure 8

As an aside, the curved red "PAID" is known (Figure 8) as a canceler of a New York carrier adhesive stamp (6LB3) issued before 1845. This is a circular from Augusta, GA dated October 18, 1842. Elliott Perry, the pioneering expert on carrier and local stamps, commented many years ago on this cover, in part, as follows:

"Use of the curved 'PAID' handstamp to cancel a stamp of the United States City Despatch Post on a local delivery letter ... Apparently the communication was deposited in the New York post office instead of in a collection box of the post, or at the office of the post. If the firm addressed held a post office box the stamp might have been used in lieu of a 1 cent postage stamp, that is, to prepay only the U.S. "drop letter" postage, which was 1 cent until July 1, 1845.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 10

This "PAID" is also seen as a canceler of the New York carrier stamp 64B10. The Figure 9 cover (an outer folded letter sheet) is docketed "March 1850". In addition, the curved "PAID" is seen on the 1847 issue and 1¢ 1851 issue, albeit as a very scarce or perhaps even rare cancel on these stamps.

Finally, as a further aside, the NYPP is known canceled by the standard round grid. An example (Sale 999, lot 632) is illustrated in Figure 10. According to the NYPP cancel census mentioned above, four-tenths of one percent of the NYPPs are so canceled and all are assumed to be from Boston. At least two off-cover St. Louis postmaster's provisionals are also known with this grid. One example is illustrated as Figure 11. Clearly, all these cases involve late uses of the provisionals.

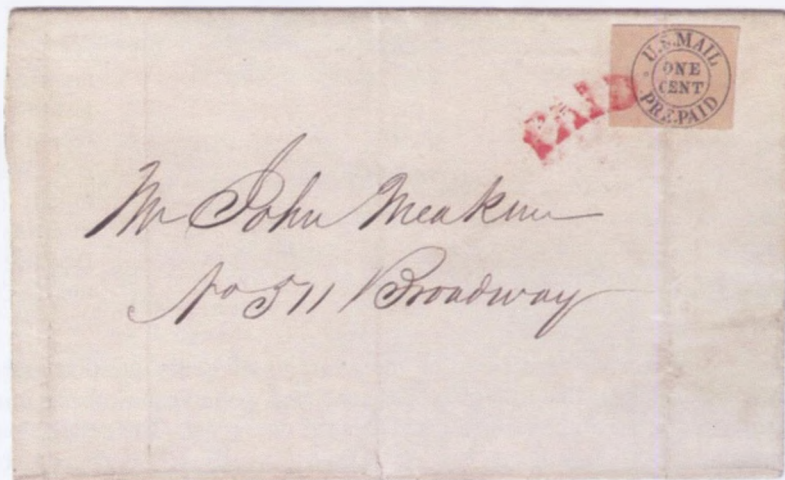


Figure 9

1. Elliott Perry, *Pat Paragraphs*, arranged by Turner and Stanton, BIA (1981), p. 29.
2. Alexander, Thomas J. *The United States 1847 Issue: A Cover Census* USPCS (2001), pp. 385-6, 459-60.
3. Ibid. p. 380.
4. Piller, Stanley J. *The New York Postmaster's Provisional*, R.G. Kaufmann Publishing. Co. (1991), pp. 55-60; plus Siegel sale 990, lot 584.
5. Ibid., pp. 99-100.
6. Elliott Perry, "100 Years Ago", *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, Vol. xviii, no. 1 (July 1949), p. 18.



Figure 11



## The Earliest Recorded Wesson Time-On-Bottom Strike

by Roger D. Curran

The November 2010 *NEWS* announced a new USCC report, *Wesson "Time on Bottom" Markings Revisited* which updated a 1990 *LaPosta* monograph on these markings. The Worcester, Mass. post office was the first to use Wesson TOB handstamps and the recent USCC report listed the earliest Worcester date as June 6, 1881. This was based on two covers where the date in the CDS read "6 06 81", one with "5PM" in the CDS and the other with "6PM". The former was in the collection of Arthur Beane and the latter in the collection of the late Bob Payne. The Beane cover, incidentally, was lot 421 in the Kelleher sale No. 623.

In presenting their article in the Spring 2010 *LaPosta* on Worcester hand-carved Wesson cancels, Worcester postal history students Bob Trachimowicz and David Simmons were aware of the June 6 "6PM" strike but concluded that the month slug was inverted in the handstamp and what appeared as a "6" when struck was intended to read as a "9". Their reasoning had to do with the killer duplexed to the June 6 strike. Trachimowicz and Simmons recorded 21 strikes of this killer, apart from the June 6 example, with dates ranging from 8/31/81-10/12/82. A June 1881 date seems out of place in terms of this range. It might also be mentioned that, apart from the two "6 06 81" examples, the next earliest reported Wesson TOB strike was more than three weeks later on July 2, 1881. And from then on, much shorter time intervals between strikes have been seen.

Your editor was rather "up in the air" about the matter and wondered if the "6 06 81" strikes might be some sort of early test of a Wesson handstamp. Also, Trachimowicz and Simmons record uses of this killer in September 1881 before September 6 and I wondered why the month slug would be removed during the month (thus creating the opportunity for an erroneous re-insertion.) What reason would there have been for doing this? Because of these matters, I decided to leave the June 6 listing in the USCC report but with a cautionary note citing the disagreement by Trachimowicz and Simmons.

Figure 1

Just recently, and based on the desire to study the question a bit further, the present owner of the card that was in Bob Payne's collection, Mike Ellingson, was contacted with a request for an image of the card. Thanks to Mike, we can show (Figure 1) the front and back of the card which settles the date issue. The dateline on the back clearly shows a manuscript "9" for the month. Thus we can confidentially say that the "6 06 81" strikes were intended to be "9 06 81".

Through the courtesy of Bob Trachimowicz, we can show the earliest reported use of a Wesson handstamp strike in Figure 2.

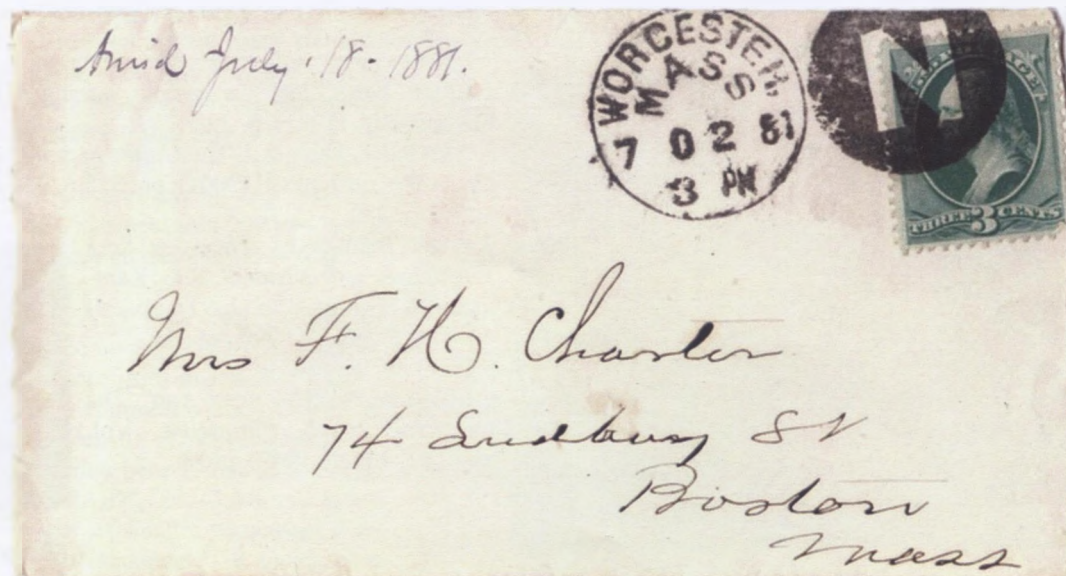


Figure 2



## Two NYFM Cancels on One Cover



Figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates a remarkable cover that bears two different NYFM cancels – Weiss GE-EP3 and GE-EP5. It is shown through the courtesy of its owner, Nick Kirke. Tracings of the cancels from the literature are shown in Figure 2. The cover has three remaining enclosures, all dated May 11, 1875. The two GE-EP3 cancels on the right are duplexed to New York May 11 postmarks. The bottom postmark is largely under the 3¢ stamp. On the back of the cover is a blue merchant's handstamp 'S. CORTE-REAL BOX 384-HAVANA MAY 18 1875' and a postmark 'HAVANA V 75 (1)'. Yamil Kouri, an expert on Cuban mails, provided the following information on the handling of this cover:

"It appears that ...[the] cover was initially franked with eleven cents (with a one cent overpayment). However, it turned out to be an underpaid double-weight letter, for which the red "RETURN FOR / POSTAGE" marking was applied in NY. I believe that the word under POSTAGE is a poorly applied double strike of this marking reading POSTAGE. The sender then affixed three additional three-cent stamps to complete the twenty cents ... The two on the left and the one to the right of the 3. The fact that some of the stamps were affixed at a later date explains the use of two different NYFM cancels. The partially visible blue pencil marking under the extra stamps probably read 10 or 20 cents (the amount due or the total postage to be collected).

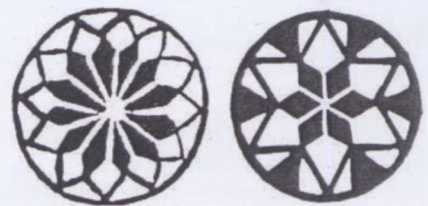


Figure 2. Tracings of GE-EP5 & GE-EP3

The sender wanted to send the letter on board the Cuba, the first steamer employed by the James E. Ward line that traveled between NY, Havana and Vera Cruz since 1867. I don't know if it missed the ship when it was returned for insufficient payment...

This was a double-weight letter for the Americans, but a triple-weight cover for the Cubans. During this period the Cuban post office had weight increments of ten grams instead of the half ounce or about fifteen grams used in the US. So it must have weighed more than 20 grams but less than 30 grams or one ounce. Between 1818 and 1877 the Cuban post office charged incoming postage due to all foreign correspondence, akin to the ship letter fees charged in the US. The difference was that in the US the charges were related to the inland distance traveled within the country, while in Cuba the charges were determined by the place of origin. One, two, three or four hard-silver reals for origins in North America or West Indies, Northern Europe, Latin America, and Spain, respectively. Printed matter was also charged one real. One silver real was equivalent to twelve and a half US cents."

Can any reader show another example of a cover bearing two different NYFM cancels?



## Noted in Passing

Herewith are some cancels that are out of the ordinary in one way or another and may be of interest to readers. Thanks to John Donnes for the tracings that appear in this article.



Figure 1

First is a simple, neat and very effective cancel – a grid of squares – used in 1900 by Sport, Texas. One wonders why this design wasn't used by more post offices. Sport was a short-lived post office in Aransas Co. that operated from 1899-1904.

The covers in Figure 2 reside in the collection of



Figure 2

Ralph Edson and show very complete strikes of the cancels involved. The West Winsted, CT is essentially a perfect strike of a hand-carved pinwheel that must have been applied when the killer was very new.



Figure 3

The odd cancel in Figure 3 was produced by a handstamp that was obviously not intended as a canceler. Such instances are, of course, rather common on mid-19<sup>th</sup> century covers, but normally involve postal markings designed for non-canceling purposes. Occasionally, however, as in Figure 3, we find non-postal handstamps being used. One assumes its original purpose was to create corner cards on envelopes and/or headings on bills and receipts. Presumably, the name of the business was removed from the top of the oval when the post office decided to use the handstamp as a canceler. Shenandoah is an operating post office in Schuylkill Co., PA established in 1865.



Figure 4





Figure 5

Two well-struck skull and bones cancels on cut squares provide an opportunity to show rather complete tracings of two popular cancels. The Donnes and Whitfield (152) tracings of the Waterbury cancel (Figure 4) are quite similar with John's showing texture that perhaps Whitfield chose not to include. From a comparison of all three, including the Rohloff tracing at lower right, it appears that the bone that extends from lower left to upper right was clipped or broke off at one end and then the other as wear progressed. The three Pittsburgh cancel tracings (Donnes, Whitfield and Cole) show differences but in the case of Donnes and Whitfield, I believe they are attributable to strike variations. See Figure 5. The Cole tracing is considerably smaller for some reason, but apparently represents the same cancel.



Figure 6

Figure 6 shows a National printing stamp, which implies use in the early 1870s, with an "RMS" ellipse cancel. The Railway Mail Service was established in 1869. "RMS" cancels are, of course, quite common in later years – from the 1890s well into the 1940s, at least. The CDS associated with the Figure 6 cancel doesn't appear to identify a railroad but rather a post office. Who can report the post office of origin or provide more information on the use of "RMS" cancels during the early years. It should be mentioned that, if this is an 1870s cancel and not a late use of the stamp, it is remarkable from the standpoint of being a very early cancel with an ellipse design. Ellipses didn't come into general use until introduced by the NYPO in mid-1876.

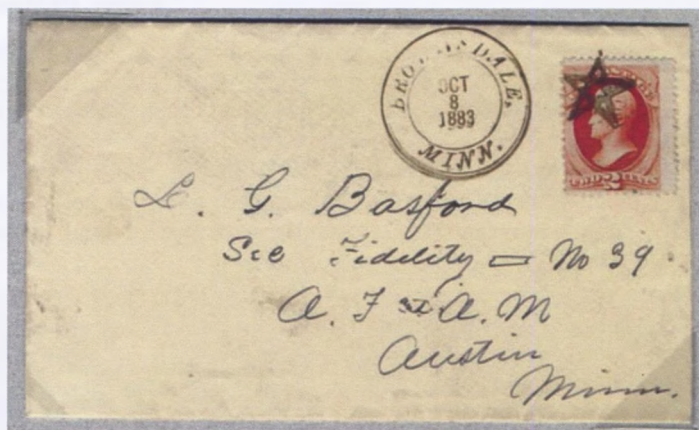


Figure 7

Brown ink is unusual but what makes the duplex strike in brown on the cover in Figure 7 especially noteworthy is the name of the post office involved—Brownsdale! One supposes it could be a coincidence but that seems doubtful. This post office was established in 1857 and operates today. Can readers show other examples from Brownsdale in 1883? Thanks to Matt Kewriga for submitting the cover from his collection.

Figure 8 shows an intriguing cancel (Whitfield 1107) from Albion, Maine. A cover bearing this cancel dated June 12, 1885 was in the stock of Ed Hines. The January/February issue of 2011 *Stamp Insider*, journal of the Federation of New York Philatelic Societies, carried a brief article by Elwyn Doubleday on fancy cancels in which he mentioned this cancel and illustrated a portion of an Albion cover dated October 28, 1885.

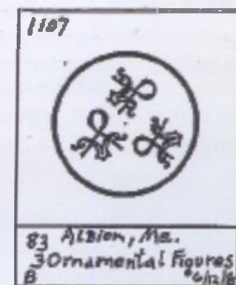


Figure 8

Elwyn made the interesting observation that the postmaster at Albion was a beekeeper and the killer was designed to show bees in flight. The hollow loop was apparently the stinging end of the bee. His October 28 strike shows the three non-loop sections somewhat filled with ink and thus I would say had more of a bee appearance than does the tracing.



Figure 9

Figure 9 is from an unknown post office but we can speculate that it was in a small town where the postmaster didn't have a pressing workload.



## Early Philadelphia Ellipses

by Roger D. Curran

Many years ago the pioneer student of ellipse cancels, Gilbert Burr, illustrated the tracing shown here as Figure 1 and said this about it:

"... a cancel from Philadelphia, but seems to have been used alone, because no others have been found thus far. This is a very large shaded numeral, enclosed in an ellipse having 13 bars."<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1



Figure 2

Dan Haskett recently submitted the cover shown in Figure 2 bearing the Figure 1 cancel that is dated April 5, 1877. This is the earliest reported style of ellipse used by Philadelphia and is very scarce. Norm Shachat has reported two covers with the "2" ellipse, one dated February 20, 1877 and the other April 6, 1877. There is a report of a Philadelphia "3" in this style but I suspect it is in error. No "1" or numbers above "3" are reported in the literature, as far as I know.

A set of 9-bar Philadelphia ellipses with serifed numerals started to appear by late March 1877. Numbers in the center "1", "3", "5", and "8" are reported by Clarke.<sup>2</sup> A "9" can be added (Figure 3). The March 28 cover bears "1877" docketing and the April 9 card has an "1877" dateline on the back.

The NEWS is eager to receive additional reports of the Figure 1 ellipse, on or off cover, with the "2" or any other number in the center. Also, reports of numbers beyond those already listed for the above-mentioned Philadelphia 9-bar ellipse in Figure 3 are sought.

Another set of Philadelphia ellipses, reported from the March 1878 to September 1879 period, was illustrated on the back page of the August 2010 NEWS.



Figure 3

1. Burr, Gilbert M. "Standardized Hand Stamp Cancellations on the Bank Note Issues" *The American Philatelist* (February 1935), page 247.
2. Clarke, Tom *A Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks*, Part 1 (revised 1991), pages 28, 30.



## Three Mysterious Cancels

by Josh Furman

While doing research for my new book, *Precanceled U.S. Postal Cards 1874-1961*, I came across a number of curious cancels.

Here are those that I would like to submit to the cancel-collecting community in the hope that more information might be forthcoming.

These cards are meeting announcements, and are hand-addressed to individuals. Neither of these characteristics is unusual to precanceled postal cards, especially in regard to cards dating from the time when addressing machines were not in common use.

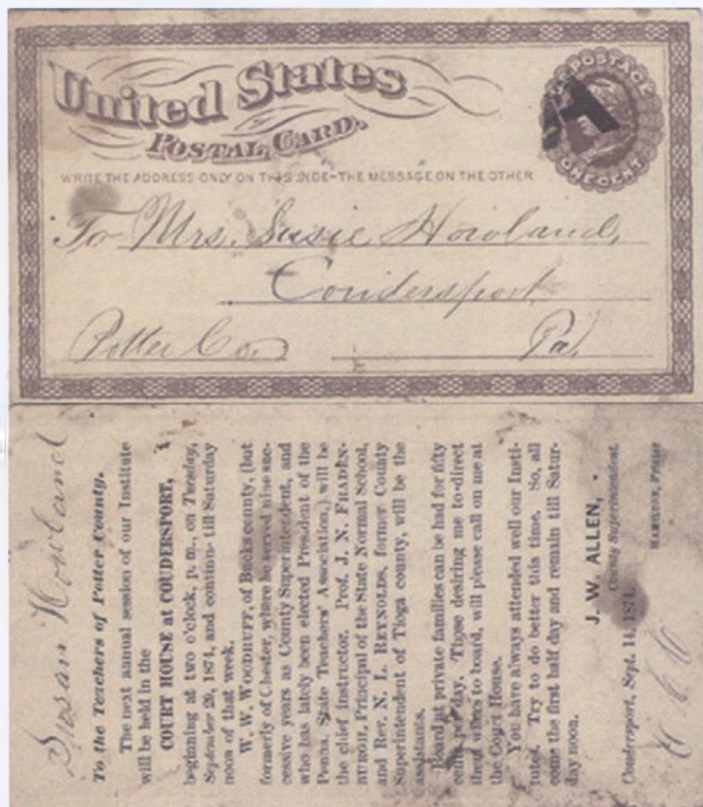


Figure 1

The first card (Figure 1) is from Coudersport, PA and has a simple capital A as its killer. The printed notice on the back announces a meeting to take place beginning on September 29, 1874. Various other Coudersport cancels are reported in the literature but none with the capital "A" killer. The postmaster's name at this time was Thompson, and he held the job from 1864 to at least 1877.<sup>1</sup> Could it be that the sender, J.W. Allen, County Superintendent, used his own initial as a cancel? This would not have been a legal cancel, unless Mr. Thompson recognized this as a precancel and accepted the mailing. Does anyone have another example of this cancel from Coudersport or another reason for its use?

A second card that has generated some discussion is also a meeting notice (Figure 2) and, in addition to the fancy cancel, has a Portland OR receiving CDS on the front. The back of the card is an invitation/announcement of a Chamber of Commerce meeting to be held on October 12, 1891. Some be-

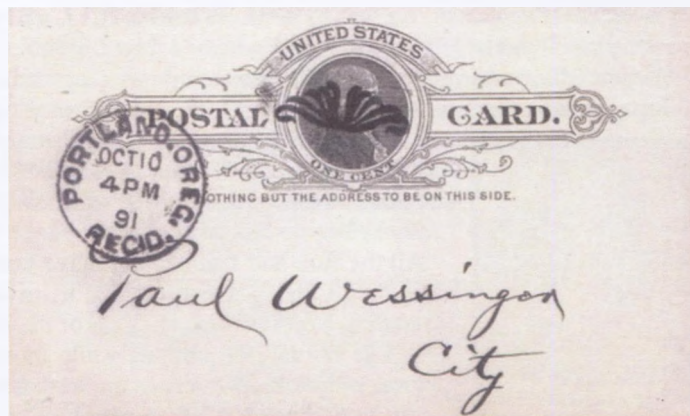


Figure 2

lieve that the card originated at Portland. Is the cancel a precancel affixed by the Chamber of Commerce? My search for an answer has so far been fruitless. Recently I was admiring Wade Saadi's pages of fancy cancels, and asked Wade if he had any ideas about this squiggly job. He referred me to Joe Crosby, who searched Cole, Whitfield and Salkind. "I have checked every page in all 3 TWICE" he wrote in an email to Roger Curran. Roger then checked Dave Smith's book *Silent Precancels*, but the cancel is not listed. Could it be a fake? The card was sent by the Secretary of the Portland Chamber of Commerce and received by the Portland post office. That sounds pretty genuine to me. So does anyone else have an example of this fancy cancel, and can its usage be verified as genuine?

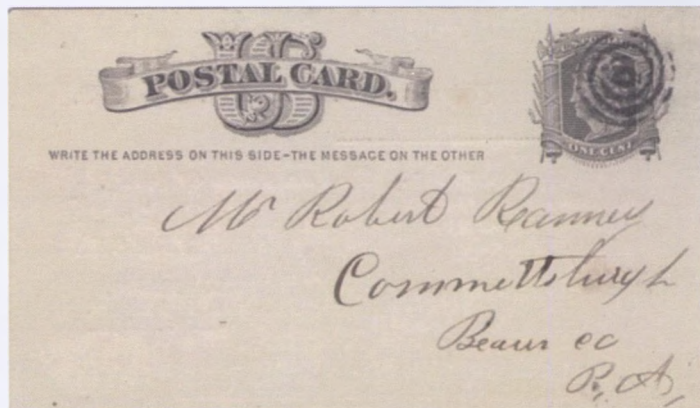


Figure 3

The third card is from Fairview, WV and is an invitation to a Bee-keeper's Convention to be held on September 23, 1879. At first glance, the cancel looks like the common target cancel. But look again! While the target cancels consist of concentric circles, if you trace the line of this one it turns out to be a spiral! This spiral is not found in any of the reference books of cancels of this period. Figure 3 is a scan of this card, the reverse also having a printed message. Has it been seen before from Fairview and, if so, was it accompanied by a CDS? This might help us determine if it is a precancel.

Hopefully some cancel collector can shed some light on these three curiosities.

1. Per Ellen Peachey, who researched this at the A.P.R.L.



## A Wonderful Cancel – Origin Identified

The post office of origin of one of the great and rare fancy cancels found on Sc 210 stamps has finally been identified. Figure 1 illustrates the cancel on a stamp that was in the collection of Alyce Evans, a former editor of the *NEWS*. Alyce has a wonderful way with words and we can do no better in illustrating the point than to quote her article on the Standing Rooster from the November 1980 *NEWS*. Her reference to the running chicken is to the Waterbury cover with three strikes of that cancel, which sold for what was, at the time, thought to be an astronomical price.



Figure 1

“All the fuss and feathers that have been raised this year over the \$240,000 Running Chicken has prompted us to write and demand equal time for the Standing Rooster (Fig. 1). One of the reasons he is deserving of attention is because he may be unique, while those Chickens are running all over the place, with five off-cover examples having been recorded and two covers.

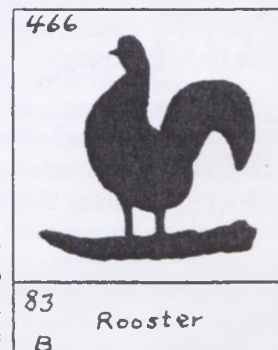


Figure 2

According to our files, the Standing Rooster has made two auction appearances. His first was in the '41 Knapp sale, the same sale incidentally in which the “three-strike” Running Chicken was sold. His second appearance was in the Siegel '69 sale, subsequent to which it received a '69 P.F. certificate (#76863) which states “it is a genuine Rooster used on the 2¢ red brown of the 1883 issue.” We saw it recently offered in a

private sale at a substantially higher price than the five dollars it brought in the Knapp sale.

This Standing Rooster is a handsome devil, and now we know why all the Chickens are running!”

The cancel is listed in Whitfield (see Figure 2) and also in Cole on 1883 issues as Bi-33.

In the recent Ventura Stamp Co. net price sale 196, lot 169 shows what appears to be the same cancel on a cover postmarked Van Wert, Ohio. The cover has a 2010 PF certificate. The Van Wert post office was established in 1838 and operates today. The town is not far from the Indiana border in the northern section of the state.



Figure 3

## Early and Late Wheels

By Roger D. Curran

How early were Wheel of Fortune (WOF) cancels used and how late? These are questions where the answer will never be known with certainty, but we can have fun trying to get close to it. Set forth below is what I can submit and the readership is asked to add to the story where able to do so.

The cover in Figure 1 is dated “JAN/7/1880”. However, from the Brooklyn received marking on the reverse (Figure 1a), we can determine that the actual date is 1881. Obviously, the Norfolk, Nebraska postmaster neglected to change the year slug a week into the new year. Nonetheless, I believe this to be a very early date. WOF cancels were advertised in the January 1881 *Postal Guide* but this is the earliest I have seen. Obviously, they must have been advertised somewhere before 1881. I assume 1880 wheels exist and seek information about such examples.



Figure 1.



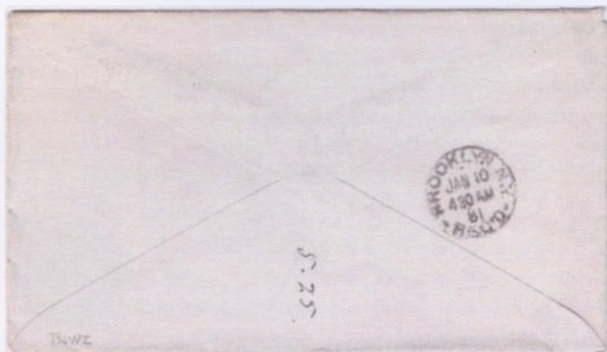


Figure 1a. The reverse with 1881 year dated receiver.



Figure 2a



Figure 2

### "T" is for Tyngsboro

Arthur Beane collected "letter" cancels for many years. These letters usually denoted the post office but also, on some occasions, the last names of the local postmasters. From Arthur's collection we can see that in 1897 there was a flurry of letter cancel activity at the Tyngsboro, MA post office including three different "T" cancels. The Figure 1 cancel is dated February 19. This cancel, incidentally, is the unattributed Whitfield cancel # 6192—see Figure 2. Figure 3, dated July 29, is Whitfield #6190. The Club's 2010 Whitfield update identified Tyngsboro as the originating PO. The Figure 4 cancel is dated December 3 and is not listed in either Whitfield or Cole, but a somewhat similar cancel appears in Cole as Lt-20 (Figure 5) on 1883 issues and attributed to Tyngsboro. Who can show additional Tyngsboro cancels or the Lt-20 on cover?

Tyngsboro is a small town just northwest of Lowell, MA near the New Hampshire border. It is an operating PO established in 1807.

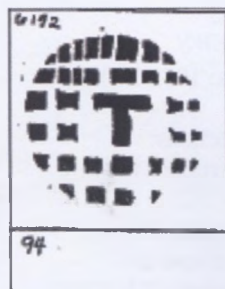


Figure 2

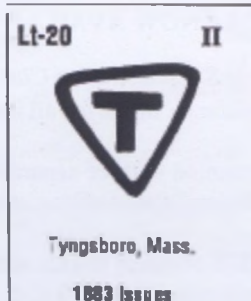


Figure 5

Figure 5

Figure 3



Figure 1

Toward the other end of the continuum is the cover in Figure 2 with a tracing courtesy of John Donnes. I suspect this is an extremely late usage and doubt that uses much later will be found. (And what an appropriate name, from our standpoint, for the post office using this cancel!) A 1915 strike from Wheeler was included in lot 930 of the Kelleher 623 sale. The Wheeler post office in Tillamook County, Oregon was established in 1910 and operates today.



## "Sunrise" Cancels

by Wendell Triplett

The November 2010 *NEWS*, p. 68, presented an unlisted sunrise cancel on a Scott 213 stamp. Figure 1 shows another example of this cancel on a Scott 210 stamp. U.S. sunrise cancels are not common. I have only been able to locate five different sunrise cancels.



Figure 1

The Figure 2 cancels were presented in the August 2008 *NEWS*, p. 36. The first cancel, with the shaded sun dome, is currently unlisted.



Figure 2

The second Figure 2 cancel is listed as Whitfield 1717 and Cole GE-146, from Fredericksburg, VA. The postmaster using this cancel was John W. Woltz, who served from April 28, 1875 to May 14, 1878. An on-cover copy is dated October 27, 1877. Another example of this cancel on cover, dated Aug. 13 is shown in Figure 3 on Scott U163 along with a cut square.



Figure 3.



Figure 4

A fourth sunrise example is Whitfield 3623 which is from Alexandria, VA. Figure 4 shows this cancel on a Scott UX3 postal card dated June 17, 1879. The postmaster using this cancel was Lewis McKenzie, who served from June 12, 1878 to August 3, 1882.



Figure 5

The fifth example is Whitfield 1724, Figure 5, used in the 1870's. Does anyone have an example of this cancel on a stamp, on-piece or on-cover?

Do you know of other sunrise cancels or have more information about the five cancels shown above? If so, please contact the *NEWS*.

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## More on St. Louis Cancels

The November 2010 *NEWS* briefly discussed two categories of St. Louis cancels – star ellipses and non-first class mail cancels. St. Louis postal history specialist Gary Hendren has now reported several covers pertinent to the November article.



Figure 1

There were at least two different star ellipses used by the St. Louis post office. The earliest measures about 18.5-19 mm wide and was spaced about 3.5 mm away from the CDS in the duplex handstamp. Gary submitted a cover with this ellipse dated 10/28/86 (Figure 1). The November *NEWS* shows a May 1885 example. A second ellipse is slightly wider and was placed very close (less than one mm) to the CDS. It is also distinguishable by a blunt top star point. Gary reports covers with this ellipse dated 1/3/88 (Figure 2), and 8/20/88 or 89 (Figure 3). A 2/29/88 cover in Gary's collection (Figure 4) with closely spaced CDS and ellipse, appears to show a sharp top star point but that may result from some extraneous ink at the top. He also submitted the wonderful cover (Figure 5) that appears to



Figures 4 and 5

also show a sharp top star, with the year slug being unreadable and bearing a revenue stamp used as postage.

The November *NEWS* illustrated a cover with a bold non-first class mail killer with a "4" in the center. Gary submits an example (Figure 6) with a "1" in the center.

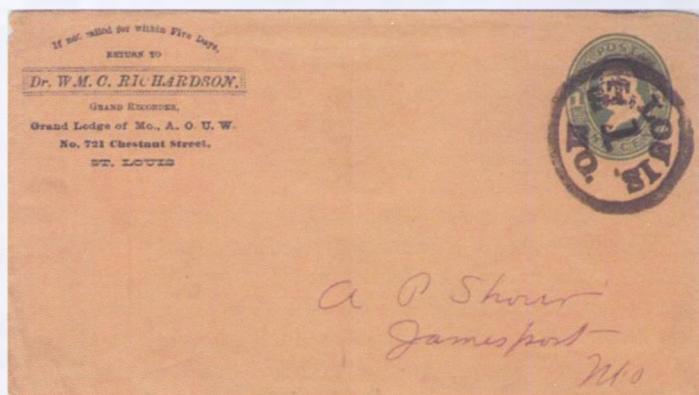


Figure 6



Figures 2 and 3

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## Possible New and Unreported NYFM Cancels

by John Donnes

With the ever growing popularity of collecting and acquiring New York Foreign Mail cancels, both on and off cover, trying to find a new and unreported cancel, whether it be fancy or rather mundane, has been quite a challenge.

Over the years a number of books and articles have been written on the subject with the most recent and readily available book being *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City 1870-1878* by William R. Weiss, Jr., published in 1990. I wish to use this particular book as the basis for this article.



Figure 1

Just recently, three covers (with what are apparently NYFM cancels) were brought to my attention with the thought that the cancels just might be new and unreported varieties. The covers are from the 1871 and 1872 time frame and, naturally, bear stamps printed by the National Bank Note Co. I would like to discuss each cover in the order that it was used.



Figure 2

The first cover (see Figure 1) was addressed to Mexico and has a ten cent stamp canceled on Jan. 4, 1871. The cancel on the cover (see Figure 2) has a very distinctive and attractive seven segmented circle of wedges style killer. When I looked at the various circle of wedges style cancels pictured in the Weiss book, only one group, the TR-W3 (Family), showed cancels bearing seven segments.

In this TR-W3 family only two drastically different seven segmented style cancels are reported. One example on cover (TR-W3) was pictured and recorded as used on Nov. 18, 1870, while the other six examples (TR-W3A, with the cancel



Figures 3 and 3a



Figure 4

being somewhat larger in size) were reported used in the latter half of 1875.



A scan (see Figure 3) from the Weiss book of the TR-W3 cancel, and a portion of Figure 5 the cover from which it was drawn, show convincing evidence that the cancel on the cover used to Mexico, and the TR-W3 cancel, are one and the same. Not only are the dates of usage within reason, but the spacing of the segments, and the small triangle between two of the segments, that hopefully shows in the cancel on the ten cent stamp to the left (see Figure 3a), are the same as depicted in the Figure 2 tracing.



Figure 6

The second cover submitted (see Figure 4) bears a pair of three cent stamps paying the six cent rate to England, and is dated May 18, 1872. The cancel on this cover (see Figure 5) at first glance resembles a "bee" though, after closer examination, it is more likely an over inked and poorly struck "cross". Weiss reports a single usage of a "cross", cancel RE-S1, used on May 8, 1872, with the cover also addressed to England (see portion of cover, Figure 6). With the dates of usage of the two covers being days apart, and the overall appearance of both cancels, I feel it most likely that the same cancel was used on both covers.



Figure 7



The third and last cover (see Figure 7) bears a seven cent stamp paying the first class rate to Germany and is dated Jun. 22, 1872. The stamp on this cover was canceled with what appears to be a three bar cancel (see Figure 8).

Weiss reports 3 examples of three bar cancels, TR-G1 to TR-G3, with usage dates a full year earlier, or a year later, than the cover we show. It is obvious, from the size and shape of the TR-G1 to TR-G3 cancels, that none of these cancels were used to cancel our Figure 7 cover.



Figure 8



Figure 9

He does, however, shows a four bar example, cancel TR-G5 (see Figure 9), that (with the top bar removed) is very close to being our "three bar" cancel. He also gives one of the dates of usage to the TR-G5 cancel as being Jun. 22, 1872.

When taking another look at the Figure 8 cancel, we see a small trace of a fourth bar at the top, a small protruding notch into the left side of the bar just below it, and a large portion of the bottom bar (somewhat over inked) being nearly incomplete on the right.

I believe again, when taking into consideration the dates of usage, the degree of angle and pressure applied, and the previously mentioned tell tale markings, that the cancel on

our seven cent cover and Weiss' TR-G5 example are, most likely, one and the same.

In closing, though I may feel the cancels on the covers appear to have been previously reported, it does not take away the scarcity and desirability factor for these items. I believe that all three covers would be a nice addition in any NYFM collection and I thank fellow Club member, Judd Sartain, for sharing them with us.

(I'd also like to take a moment and thank Mr. Weiss for one of the comments he made in his NYFM book. On page 305, where he talks about the TR-G3 cancel, in the last paragraph he talks about, and gives, a very nice plug to the U.S. Cancellation Club by saying "I highly recommend this organization to you, and all collectors interested in any kind of cancellation should, by all means, consider membership".)

### Whitfield Book Available Again

Additional copies of the book *Cancellations found on 19th Century U.S. Stamps* by Kenneth A. Whitfield are now available. The book contains more than 6,000 tracings and is a valuable supplement to the Skinner-Eno and Cole books. This printing incorporates the new Whitfield update that has been offered recently. The cost is \$52 postpaid. Checks should be payable to U.S.C.C. and orders sent to U.S.C.C., 20 University Avenue, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

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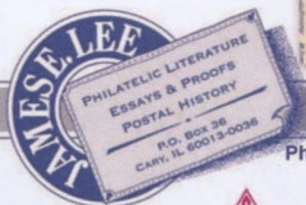
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## More on "Boston Negative" Look-alikes

by Roger D. Curran

One of the frequently encountered categories of cancellations in these pages is that of the large "Boston negatives" used during the 1878-1883 period. While originating largely from Boston, they were also used by at least 11 other post offices to some extent. Next to Boston, Portland, Maine was by far and away the largest user. In November 2003, the *NEWS* issued a "progress report" listing Boston negatives from other post offices. The present article adds two more Portland cancels to the list and provides an illustration for a third. All involve "variated" designs; that is, cancelers that were altered by carving away portions of the design to make their appearance distinctive.



Figure 1



Figure 1 is datelined March 28, 1883 and is thought to be a square killer that was given four diagonal and two horizontal cuts. One of the four manufactured styles of these cancels is a square with horizontal negative lines at top and bot-

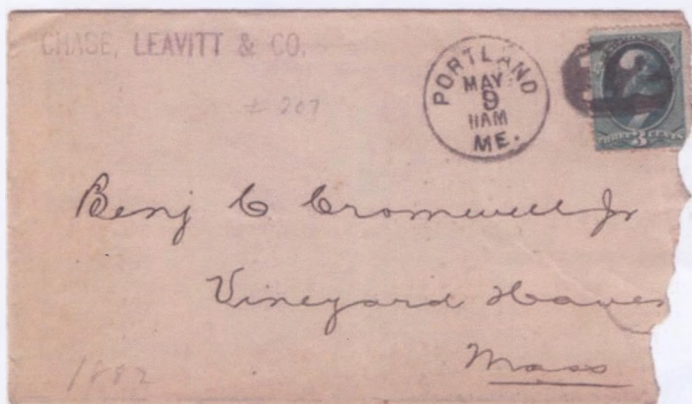


Figure 2



tom, but Portland has not been reported to have used any. Thus it is assumed that the horizontal cuts were carved by hand. For listing purposes, this cancel is designated as P-VS-O.

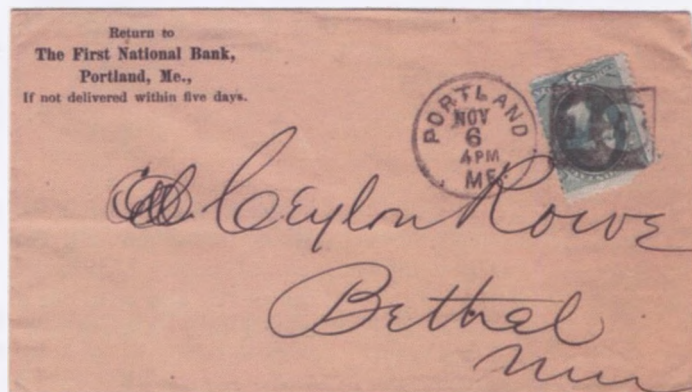


Figure 3



Figure 2 has no confirming year date but a previous owner penciled "1882" on the cover which is plausible since the stamp is a Sc 207 issued in 1881. Designating this cancel in accordance with the system used in the 2003 progress report is difficult to do. Was it a square (see straight left side) or circular (see round right side) killer that received three cuts (rather than just two) on the left side? It is assumed to be a circular killer and is listed in the 2003 report as P-VC-12.

Figure 3 is considered a new design even though a "13" in a square is listed in the report. One does see size variation in square cancels with the same number, but such variations are not listed unless the difference is dramatic. Boston negative square cancels are typically at least 23mm high and this cancel is a shade under 19mm, which is enough difference to warrant a separate designation which is P-S-13-3.

Finally, we'll add a little information about a pair of Boston negatives from Hartford, VT, both of which are listed in the 2003 report. Years ago, in the January 1963 *NEWS*, the cancel in Figure 4 was shown with the following remarks:

"Recently we received a cover from Dr. H.K. Thompson of Boston, franked with a 2¢ Brown #210, postmarked Hartford, Vt. August 10 using the Boston Negative B in a rectangle with heavy lines above and below as a killer. Dr. Thompson suspected the killer might have been one which had been used in Boston and later found its way to Hartford, Vt.



Figure 4

This cover was sent to Mr. Edward L. Willard (#125), our expert on #210 and its cancellations.



Mr. Willard writes as follows: This is indeed an interesting item. The negative numeral and letter sets are well known from Boston on 3¢ Greens but they wore out before the time of US #210. Apparently the Boston Postmaster gave some of his old killers to visiting postmasters from small towns in New England. The '10' from Andover, Mass. is well known."



Figure 5

I have a photocopy of a Hartford cover bearing this cancel that shows a fairly sharp image that looks more like the typical Boston negative (Figure 5) of this style. It is postmarked August 7 with 1886 docketing.

I disagree with Mr. Willard's theory that uses of the Boston negative style cancelers by post offices other than Boston result from the Boston postmaster giving out old killers. Portland used a large number of these cancelers over a prolonged time period and also used the small "Boston negatives" before that. Andover, Mass. used a fair number of the large negatives. I'm quite sure there was a handstamp supplier, one

who sold this style of canceler directly, not only to Boston but also to other post offices.

There is a "B" in a circle negative ring design known from Hartford (Figure 6) dated June 15 (1883). The USPS postmaster data base lists the following Hartford postmasters with their appointment dates:

Justin C. Brooks	Mar. 19, 1862
Willis S. Brooks	Nov. 3, 1875
Allen Pease	April 8, 1881
Nellie Brooks	July 14, 1884-1914

Nellie Brooks is apparently responsible for the 1886 "B" cancel but why would Allen Pease be using the "B" in 1883 unless it was a holdover from the tenure of Willis Brooks?

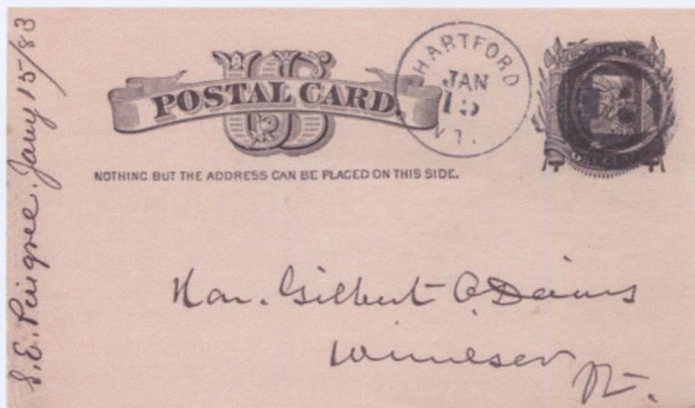


Figure 6

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"\$" in purple  
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Duxbury Ma., Ex-Beane



Pumpkin Head  
(Whitfield #123) complete  
bold strike on #136.



"I Overcome Difficulties" (Skinner-Eno #PA-E 8), clearly struck negative design ties #65 on cover, "Windham Station O Feb 25" cds, one of the most unusual cancells of the period, Extremely Fine, Ex-Myerson, Skinner.



Old English "D"  
(Cole unlisted) of South  
Duxbury Ma. Ex-Beane.



Skull & Crossbones  
(Cole #SK-48) of  
Greenfield Mass.,  
beautiful strike on  
#210, Ex-Skinner.

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### Cancellation Gallery

These 4-ring cancels from Philadelphia have been noted from late 1879 to early 1882 with numbers up to "13". Interestingly, no "10" in this set has ever been reported. It was assumed to exist for years. However, prominent collector Dr. Robert S. deWasserman wrote the following in the September 1958 *U.S. Cancellation Club NEWS*:

"I am sure the 10 never existed and challenge every student of U.S. cancellations to produce one."

So far as is known, the challenge remains unanswered.

